

## **Alyson Kwok – University of Alberta**

**Project:** *Maximizing patient engagement through collaborative outcome measure selection and tracking: patients' perceptions of the use of physical therapy outcome measures post-stroke*



### **Biography**

Alyson graduated with a BScPT from the University of Alberta in 2004 and has worked as a Physical Therapist in Edmonton for the last 15 years, primarily treating patients who have had a stroke in both acute and subacute settings.

She spent several years as the team leader of the Stroke Physical Therapy team at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, working to ensure clinicians had access to best practice information through initiatives such as a provincial stroke PT Community of Practice.

Currently, Alyson is part of the Healthcare Improvement Team at the Glenrose, where she assists and leads projects focused on quality improvement, evaluation, research and implementation of best practices. In addition to her clinical work, she has remained connected with the University of Alberta as an instructor of both the lab component of the Adult Neurology MPT labs and the Neurology module of the Graduate Bridging Certificate Program.

As an instructor, Alyson works to bridge the gap between student and clinician, bringing real-world examples and case studies into her teaching. Her efforts have been rewarded with both a RMSA Excellence in Teaching award and a Graduate Student Assistance Teaching Award.

Alyson has spent years working directly with patients and has become passionate about ensuring the patient voice is incorporated at every level of healthcare. She is now exploring patient engagement and outcome measures with Dr. Trish Manns in the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine.

### **Project Summary**

After a person has had a stroke, they often receive physical therapy to improve their mobility. Physical therapists regularly measure a patient's progress using standardized outcome measures, such as timing how quickly a person can walk. Currently in Alberta, the way in which these measures are selected is not standardized, so a person may not receive the same type of tests as they move to different facilities or therapists. Patients may not fully understand which outcome measures are selected or how the measures track progress towards their health goals. This project will involve talking to people who have received physical therapy after stroke in group interviews, called focus groups. The information gathered will help us to better understand what outcome measures are meaningful to patients and how they would like to be involved in tracking their own progress.

The whole project will be guided by a small research team, which will include one to three patient advisors. Patient advisors are former patients who have relevant personal experience and contribute their perspective to the study. Patient advisors help to keep the research team focused on the patient experience.

The end result of this project will be a set of recommendations regarding how patients and therapists can collaborate to select and track outcome measures in a way that resonates with patients who receive physical therapy after stroke. If put in place, these recommendations could help patients to actively participate in their own care by monitoring progress toward their stated goals.